

1. An information processing apparatus comprising:

addition means, for adding said encrypted life counter to a content data file; and

2. An information processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said transmission means externally transmits said content data file via the Internet.

reception means, for externally receiving, via a network, a content data file to which an encrypted life counter has been added;

subtraction means, for subtracting a specific value from said encrypted life counter; and

25 control means, for inhibiting said processing
means from processing said content data file when the
value held by said encrypted life counter has been

reduced to a value smaller than said specific value.

4. An information processing apparatus according
to claim 3, wherein said reception means externally
5 receives said content data file via the Internet.

5. An information processing apparatus according
to claim 4, wherein said processing means displays,
prints or reproduces data in said content data file.

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6. An information processing system whereby a
first information processing apparatus and a second
information processing apparatus are interconnected,
wherein said first information apparatus comprises:

15 encryption means, for encrypting a life counter
for content data,

addition means, for adding said encrypted life
counter to a content data file, and

20 transmission means, for transmitting, via a
network, said content data file having said added life
counter to said second information apparatus; and

wherein said second information processing
apparatus comprises:

25 reception means, for receiving, via a network,
from said first information processing apparatus a
content data file to which an encrypted life counter
has been added,

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processing means, for processing said content data file,

subtraction means, for subtracting a specific value from said encrypted life counter, and

5 control means, for inhibiting said processing means from processing said content data file when the value held by said encrypted life counter has been reduced to a number smaller than said specific value.

10 7. An information processing system according to claim 6, wherein said transmission means or said reception means externally transmits or receives said content data file via the Internet.

15 8. An information processing system according to claim 7, wherein said processing means displays, prints or reproduces data in said content data file.

20 9. An information processing system according to claim 8, wherein said second information processing apparatus further comprises:

copying means, for copying said content data file including said encrypted life counter; and

25 counter control means, for reducing, to half a value, the value held by life counters of a source file that is copied and a destination file when copying said content data file.

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10. An information processing system according to claim 8, wherein said second information processing apparatus further comprises:

moving means, for moving said content data file
5 without changing the value held by said encrypted life counter.

11. An information processing system according to claim 8, wherein said first information processing
10 apparatus further comprises:

determination means, for determining the value to
be held by said life counter in correlation with the
frequency of the display, printing or reproduction of
said content data.

12. An information processing system according to claim 8, wherein said first information processing
15 apparatus further comprises:

determination means, for determining the value to
20 be held by said life counter in correlation with a content data reproduction time, and wherein said subtraction means of said second information processing apparatus decrements the value held by said encrypted life counter by a value correlated with a period of
25 time during which said content data is reproduced.

13. An information processing apparatus

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comprising:

data transmission means, for externally
transmitting, via a network, a content data file;

life counter transmission means, for externally
5 transmitting, via said network, a life counter for said
content data file; and

program transmission means, for externally
transmitting, via said network, an application program
file for processing said content data file.

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14. An information processing apparatus according
to claim 13, wherein said data transmission means, said
life counter transmission means and said program
transmission means externally transmit said content
15 data file via the Internet.

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15. An information processing apparatus according
to claim 14, wherein said application program file is
used to display, print or reproduce data in said
20 content data file.

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16. An information processing apparatus
comprising:

data reception means, for receiving, via a
25 network, a content data file;

life counter reception means, for receiving, via
said network, a life counter for said content data

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file;

program reception means, for receiving, via said network, an application program file for processing said content data file;

5 encryption means, for encrypting said life counter;

addition means, for adding said encrypted life counter to said content data file;

transmission means, for transmitting, via said
10 network, said application program file to a different information processing apparatus; and

control means, for permitting the reading only of the content data file for an application program that is currently being executed by said different
15 information processing apparatus.

17. An information processing apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said data reception means, said life counter reception means and said program reception means externally receive said content data file via the
20 Internet.

18. An information processing apparatus according to claim 17, wherein said application program file is
25 used to display, print or reproduce data in said content data file.

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19. An information processing apparatus comprising:

reception means, for receiving, via a network, an application program file for processing content data from a different information processing apparatus;

processing means, for executing, via said network, said application program for processing content data stored in said different information processing apparatus;

subtraction means, for subtracting, via said network, a specific value from a life counter for said content data stored in said different information processing apparatus each time said content data file is processed; and

control means, for inhibiting said processing means from processing content data when the value held by said encrypted life counter has been reduced to a value smaller than said specific value.

20. An information processing apparatus according to claim 19, wherein, via said network, said processing means displays, prints or reproduces data in said content data file.

21. An information processing system whereby a first information processing apparatus, a second information processing apparatus and a third

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information processing apparatus are interconnected,
wherein said first information processing apparatus
comprises:

data transmission means, for transmitting, via a
5 network, a content data file to said second information
processing apparatus,

life counter transmission means, for transmitting,
via said network, a life counter for said content data
file to said second information processing apparatus,
10 and

program transmission means, for transmitting, via said network, an application program file for processing said content data file to said second information processing apparatus;

15 wherein said second information processing
apparatus comprises:

data reception means, for receiving, via said network, said content data file from said first information apparatus,

20 life counter reception means, for receiving, via
said network, a life counter for said content data file
from said first information processing apparatus,

program reception means, for receiving, via said network, an application program file for processing said content data file from said first information processing apparatus,

encryption means, for encrypting said life

counter,

addition means, for adding said encrypted life counter to said content data file,

transmission means, for transmitting, via said
5 network, said application program file to said third information processing apparatus, and

control means for permitting the reading of the content data file only for an application program that is currently being executed by said third information
10 processing apparatus; and

wherein said third information processing apparatus comprises:

reception means, for receiving, via said network, an application program file for processing content data
15 received from said second information processing apparatus,

processing means, for executing, via said network, said application program for processing content data stored in said second information processing apparatus;

20 subtraction means, for subtracting, via said network, a specific value from a life counter for said content data stored in said different information processing apparatus each time said content data file is processed, and

25 control means, for inhibiting said processing means from processing content data when the value held by said encrypted life counter has been reduced a value

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smaller than said specific value.

22. An information processing system according to
claim 21, wherein said data transmission means, said
5 life counter transmission means and said program
transmission means, or said data reception means, said
life counter reception means and said program reception
means externally transmit or receive said content data
file via the Internet.

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23. An information processing system according to
claim 22, wherein said processing means displays,
prints or reproduces data in said content data file.

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24. An information processing system according to
claim 23, wherein said processing means inhibits the
copying of said content data having said encrypted life
counter stored in said second information processing
apparatus, even if said application program is
20 executed.

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25. An information processing system according to
claim 23, wherein said processing means inhibits the
moving of said content data having said encrypted life
25 counter stored in said second information processing
apparatus, even if said application program is
executed.

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determination means, for determining the value to
5 be held by said life counter in correlation with the
frequency of the display, printing or reproduction of
said content data.

determination means, for determining the value to be held by said life counter in correlation with a content data reproduction time, and wherein said subtraction means decrements the value held by said encrypted life counter by a value correlated with a period of time during which said content data is reproduced.

printing means, for printing content data on a sheet.

29. An information processing system according to claim 23, wherein said data reception means of said

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- (a) encrypting a life counter for content data;
- (b) adding said encrypted life counter to a

(c) for externally transmitting, via a network, said content data file having said added life counter.

5 34. An information processing method comprising
the steps of:

(a) externally receiving, via a network, a content data file to which an encrypted life counter has been added;

10 (b) processing said content data file;

(c) subtracting a specific value from said encrypted life counter; and

(d) inhibiting said step (b) for processing said content data file when the value held by said encrypted life counter has been reduced to a value smaller than said specific value.

35. An information processing method comprising
the steps of:

20 (a) externally transmitting, via a network, a
content data file;

(b) externally transmitting, via said network, a life counter for said content data file; and

(c) externally transmitting, via said network, an application program file for processing said content data file.

36. An information processing method comprising the steps of:

(a) receiving, via a network, a content data file;

5 (b) receiving, via said network, a life counter for said content data file;

(c) receiving, via said network, an application program file for processing said content data file;

(d) encrypting said life counter;

10 (e) adding said encrypted life counter to said content data file;

(f) transmitting, via said network, said application program file to a different information processing apparatus; and

15 (g) permitting the reading only of the content data file for an application program that is currently being executed by said different information processing apparatus.

20 37. An information processing method comprising the steps of:

(a) receiving, via a network, an application program file for processing content data from a different information processing apparatus;

25 (b) executing, via said network, said application program for processing content data stored in said different information processing apparatus;

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(c) subtracting, via said network, a specific value from a life counter for said content data stored in said different information processing apparatus each time said content data file is processed; and

5 (d) inhibiting said step (b) for processing content data when the value held by said encrypted life counter has been reduced to a value smaller than said specific value.

10 38. A computer-readable storage medium on which a program is stored that permits a computer to perform:

(a) a process for encrypting a life counter for content data;

15 (b) a process for adding said encrypted life counter to a content data file; and

(c) a process for externally transmitting, via a network, said content data file having said added life counter.

20 39. A computer-readable storage medium on which a program is stored that permits a computer to perform:

(a) a process for externally receiving, via a network, a content data file to which an encrypted life counter has been added;

25 (b) a process for processing said content data file;

(c) a process subtracting a specific value from

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said encrypted life counter; and

(d) a process for inhibiting said step (b) for
processing said content data file when the value held
by said encrypted life counter has been reduced to a
5 value smaller than said specific value.

40. A computer-readable storage medium on which a
program is stored that permits a computer to perform:

(a) a process for externally transmitting, via a
10 network, a content data file;

(b) a process for externally transmitting, via
said network, a life counter for said content data
file; and

(c) a process for externally transmitting, via
15 said network, an application program file for
processing said content data file.

41. A computer-readable storage medium on which a
program is stored that permits a computer to perform:

(a) a process for receiving, via a network, a
20 content data file;

(b) a process for receiving, via said network, a
life counter for said content data file;

(c) a process for receiving, via said network, an
25 application program file for processing said content
data file;

(d) a process for encrypting said life counter;

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(f) a process for transmitting, via said network, said application program file to a different information processing apparatus; and

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(b) a process for executing, via said network, said application program for processing content data stored in said different information processing apparatus;

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43. An information processing apparatus
comprising:

addition means, for adding said encrypted life counter to a content data file.

encrypting a life counter for content data; and
adding said encrypted life counter to a content
data file.

encrypting a life counter for content data; and
adding said encrypted life counter to a content

46. An information processing apparatus comprising:

processing means, for processing said content data

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file;
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subtraction means, for subtracting a specific value from said encrypted life counter each time said content data file is processed; and

5 control means, for inhibiting said processing means from processing said content data file when the value held by said encrypted life counter has been reduced to a value smaller than said specific value.

10 47. An information processing method comprising
the steps of:

externally inputting a content data file to which
an encrypted life counter has been added;

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processing said content data file;
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15 subtracting a specific value from said encrypted
life counter each time said content data file is
processed; and

inhibiting said processing means from processing
said content data file when the value held by said
20 encrypted life counter has been reduced to a value
smaller than said specific value.

48. A storage medium which stored a program, said program comprising the steps of:

25 externally inputting a content data file to which
an encrypted life counter has been added;

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processing said content data file;
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subtracting a specific value from said encrypted
life counter each time said content data file is
processed; and

- inhibiting said processing means from processing
5 said content data file when the value held by said
encrypted life counter has been reduced to a value
smaller than said specific value.